

# AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT

INCORPORATED

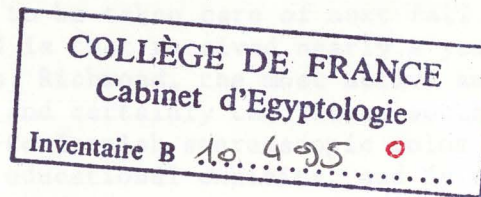
EDWARD W. FORBES  
*President*

ROBERT WOODS BLISS  
E. E. CALVERLEY  
DOWS DUNHAM  
JOHN A. WILSON  
*Vice-Presidents*

BERNARD V. BOTHMER  
*Treasurer*  
*Executive Secretary*

ASHTON SANBORN  
*Assistant Treasurer*

RICHARD A. PARKER  
*Membership Secretary*



479 HUNTINGTON AVENUE  
BOSTON 15, MASSACHUSETTS

15 June 1955

## NEWSLETTER NUMBER EIGHTEEN

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT DATED MAY 28

The Cairo season is coming to an end, at least as far as the Center is concerned. In a few days this office will be closed until September and I shall move to Alexandria to work at the Graeco-Roman Museum there for a month or so. The past eight and a half months seem to have gone by very quickly, but in retrospect they were rich and rewarding and full of pleasant interruptions which made the routine of research, office work, and field trips a rather varied experience. For one thing, we now have a group of Members, admittedly few in number, here in Cairo who are genuinely interested in the antiquity and art of the Nile Valley and there is hope that some day, in the not too distant future insha'allah, a permanent institution will serve American historians and archaeologists in this part of the Near East. There also was the never-ending stream of casual visitors who came from far away to ask advice as to the best way in which to get around in Egypt or to tell about their experiences. Among them we had a young American student from the Free University of Berlin who, without knowing any Arabic, traveled up and down the country for several weeks without encountering any difficulties or having trouble in finding a place to sleep. There were the Sunday excursions when peaceful temple ruins were swarming with children, and there were the quiet happy afternoons when this writer walked the length and breadth of northern Mitrahine with John Dimick in order to learn something about the topography of ancient Memphis from one who knew his levels and map coordinates. The group of Fulbright grantees is breaking up, and some of them have left already, and a few of our friends in the U.S. Information Service are being transferred or are going on home leave.

It is getting warmer, and the trees outside the wall of the British Embassy are losing their leaves. The black-top highway to Suez is sweating oil, and on a recent non-archaeological excursion to the Red Sea it was noticed that the road along the coast to the south, in the direction of Port Sofaga, has been surfaced for at least 100 kilometers, thus opening the wild and strangely beautiful seashore below the cliffs of the eastern desert to weekend travelers. And speaking of travelers, on a day in February two former Presidents of the Archaeological Institute of America, Mr. Lord and Mr. Conant, passed through the lobby of the Semiramis Hotel within the same hour.





Though we have filled most requests from institutions and colleagues at home, a few items will have to be taken care of next fall. One of the major assignments almost completed is that received nearly a year ago from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, the most active among the new collections of Egyptian art in the U.S. and certainly the finest south of Baltimore. The Museum had asked the Center to furnish stereoscopic color views of Egyptian sites and monuments for its educational exhibits, and by this time over one hundred specified subjects have already been taken and delivered. Some of them will be viewed by many thousands of Virginians when the Museum's modern artmobile takes to the road again this fall.

Much color photography has been done in Egypt during this winter and spring, professionally and otherwise. There was a team from the International Film Foundation in New York; Mr. Boyer of the National Geographic, Washington, took shots of all ancient sites and even flew to the Oasis of Siwa; and a few days ago we had a visit from Mr. Carl DeSuze, of the Boston Globe, who is roaming all over the Near East on a color-photography assignment.

There was no announcement when the dig of the Swiss Institute between Abusir and Abu Gurab ended in March. The site, known locally as Sheikh Tukhy, lies to the west of Qubri Basatin on a kind of promontory. The excavations, which were heavily subsidized by German institutions and authorities, uncovered the traces of the Sun Sanctuary of King Weserkaf of Dynasty V, but it is learned that practically nothing was found except for a small fragment of an inscription and several mud sealings with the king's name. The sanctuary had served as a quarry and only the remains of some walls are left. Next year the causeway and valley sanctuary will be cleared according to unconfirmed reports.

At Saqqara the Chief Inspector, Mr. Zakaria Ghoneim, has continued his excavation of the unfinished pyramid of Dynasty III and cleared part of the long sloping corridor down to floor level. His most spectacular find is a small ivory or bone tablet with a list of objects in vertical columns, at the right end of which is a royal Nebty name reading Djeseret-ankh.

Mr. Jean Vercoutter's campaign on the island of Sai in the Sudan ended in the beginning of February. The site lies a few miles south of Amara and a little to the north of Sedeinga. Apart from two purely Nubian C-group tumuli, the excavation concentrated on the so-called fortress near the northeastern shore of the island where levels from Turkish times down to Dynasty XVIII were recognized. There are reports that Mr. Vercoutter will succeed Mr. Peter L. Shinnie as Commissioner of Archaeology for the Sudan during the coming year.

\* \* \*

#### NEWS FROM GIZA

For about a month this spring the Department of Antiquities kept a crew of workmen busy clearing the causeway of Cheops which runs from the temple on the east side of the pyramid in a northeasterly direction down to the cultivation. The causeway has been freed of all debris from the temple to the edge of the cliff, and it is planned to purchase a number of the houses in the valley below in order to probe next year for the Cheops Valley Temple,



which must be hidden in the cultivation. No objects were found in clearing the causeway.

At present the Department of Antiquities is clearing the area north of the northwest corner of the Cheops Pyramid, south of the beginning of the path which leads to what is known as "the house of Monsieur Baraize." According to Reisner's map they are busy in the triangle formed by G 2452, G 2391, and G 2451, and the debris is being brought by rail across the plateau in front of the Cheops Pyramid and dumped over the cliff to the east. The purpose is to clear the entire west side of the Cheops Pyramid, from north to south, and the wall now retaining the rubble of the eastern edge of the Western Cemetery will probably have to be removed.

The neighborhood of the Cheops Boat Grave, on the south side of the Great Pyramid, offers a quiet aspect, except for the construction of a very large red-brick building with high gabled roof which rises now between the north side of the temporary shed of the Boat Grave and the southern baseline of the pyramid. It will serve as an assembly plant and workshop for the boat, once the systematic removal of the loose parts of the vessel are undertaken. Meanwhile tests and spot examinations of the wood and other objects in the Boat Grave are being continued and the matting covering many panels and spars is being removed in sections. The pieces described in Newsletter XV, page 11, line 2, as "a kind of heavy shoelace" have now been identified by a prominent botanist as stems of Typha australis, probably a variation of Typha angustata which is still common in Egypt today.

Behind, and directly to the west, of Professor Ahmed Fakhry's house in the Western Cemetery at Giza a large modern storeroom, almost a museum, has been built which in addition to the storeroom further east will house his finds from the Snofru Valley Temple of the Bent Pyramid at Dahshur. The famous reliefs with representatives of the estates and farms, now under a temporary shelter at Dahshur, would suffer too much from the abrasive action of wind-blown sand and will soon be removed to the magazine at Giza. Meanwhile the new storeroom displays in well-ordered fashion the startling finds of sculpture, reliefs, and architectural ornaments found by the late Abdessalam Hussein at the Pyramid of Isesy of Dynasty V at South Saqqara which thus can be studied easily near Cairo.

On a recent visit to the excavations of the University of Alexandria in the northwestern cemetery at Giza, Professor Abubakr generously gave his time to show to a small group, including Mr. Bothmer, the mastabas which he has uncovered since 1949. The important aspects of their construction and the beauty of their decorations have been described elsewhere, but one unique feature may be mentioned here. On the south side of the mastaba of Ipy (Lepsius 19) there are two low structures, well preserved except for the upper part of the wall and the roof, which must have been used to house wild beasts, probably hyenas. They are approximately circular, made of limestone rubble and mudbrick, have a low covered entrance with arrangements for a vertically sliding trap-door and, protruding on one side, a shelter which is shaped like a coffin with one end panel removed. There is an intricate system whereby the beasts could be given water without opening the cage: a grooved limestone slab runs through the wall of each cage at a slight incline from the outside to the interior, and a servant was probably employed to pour



the liquid into a limestone basin on the outside which is still intact. The two watering systems are on adjoining walls of the two cages, and the care with which the whole complex has been constructed is best indicated by the fact that the two receiving basins are within a few inches of each other although one basin, connected to both influx channels, would have sufficed. The cages, probably dating from Dynasty V admittedly seem incredible, but no other explanation is possible for this layout.

\* \* \*

### DELTA SITES - III

The tourist who today takes the short trip from Cairo to the village of Matarieh, a few miles to the northeast of Egypt's capital, hardly gains the impression that the famous obelisk of Sesostri I marks the site of what was once a very important sanctuary and a thriving city. Heliopolis, as the place has been known since the days of the Greek authors, was one of the few great religious centers of ancient Egypt, the origin of which reaches back into early dynastic, and even predynastic times. From there stems the cult of the Sun God Ra, and the predominance of Heliopolis is attested in many inscriptions of other temples throughout the whole of Egypt.

The granite obelisk, sole survivor of the many which once dotted the sanctuaries of Heliopolis, stands in the middle of a field which was being plowed by fellaheen with teams of cattle on the day, early in April, when we went there. The monument is reached by a dam from a grove of trees which lies to the left, west, of the road leading to the village of Arab el Hisn further northeast. The site must have once bordered on the eastern desert, but increased irrigation and the growth of the modern oasis of Heliopolis have changed its character completely. The obelisk stands, literally, in a hole in the ground the sides of which are fortified by cement and surmounted by a metal railing. Even in the spring the water in the hole reaches up as far as the final d.t of the column of inscription with which each side of the obelisk is decorated; thus the Middle Kingdom level on which the obelisk rests lies about 12 feet below the surface. The inscription on the east face is, incidentally, partly obliterated by wasps' nests.

The lonely obelisk offers a fine view across the fields, but the most interesting section of the site lies to the northwest: Kom el Hisn, the kom of Arab el Hisn, where a large part of the ancient enclosure wall and of the city of On is still preserved. The best plan is that made by Ricke and published in ZAS 71 (1935), p. 125, fig. 4, but at that time large portions of the west wall (which actually runs southeast-northwest) were still buried under the kom which extended from the wall to the village and on which Arab el Hisn is partly built. In the last twenty years, however, not only has the kom been greatly reduced, thus disclosing more of the wall toward the north, but the wall itself has been attacked by the sebakheen. As a matter of fact, on the day of our visit, they were busy, in broad daylight, hacking away and loading their donkeys in order to take the fertile remnants of ancient constructions to their fields, and our presence did not disturb them the least bit.

The west enclosure wall consists of two bastions, an outer and an inner one. The space between them is gradually being leveled and, at the southern end, already turned into fields. These bastions are up to eight meters high,



and their stratigraphy can be comfortably studied from the ground as they are nearly vertical. The sebakheen attack them at the base line, and after sufficient undercutting their efforts bring down a portion of wall. The core consists mainly of mud brick, but is full of pottery fragments, bits of the famous red quartzite from the nearby Gebel el Ahmar, faience, bones, and pieces of charcoal. The fine Roman well, to which Leclant drew attention some years ago in *Orientalia*, is being more and more isolated by the sebakheen so that about one half of its masonry is accessible and blocks are being taken off the top courses of which 18 are still preserved. The inside has been completely cleaned out and one can inspect it from above. At the bottom, on the west side, there is a doorway four courses high. The total height of the well's structure is approximately 6 meters and the diameter 3.5 m. Right now it is still a perfect specimen and should be recorded before the stones are gone. Southeast of the well recent sebakh work on the east part of the wall has brought to light a big limestone lintel with torus molding and cavetto cornice. Opposite it, on the west portion of the wall, we noticed another fine stratigraphic feature, an inclined vein of debris (mostly pottery fragments and bones) which must have been the refuse thrown down the street from a house on a higher level which has now disappeared. Considering the care with which the stratigraphy of ancient sites is studied and recorded in Near Eastern, Greek, Roman, and New World archaeology the Egyptologist realizes how little has been done, and is being done, to improve field methods in a country where tomb and temple excavations have followed a pattern which, up to the present, remains unmodified.

In the middle of May a two-day trip took us to a number of rarely frequented sites. We were five Egyptologists of four different nationalities in two jeeps, including one specialist in architecture and one in the field of ancient geography and topography who carefully noted every detail of the nearly 450-kilometer itinerary with regard to intersections, police posts, road marks, canal crossings, and points of the compass. We therefore stopped frequently to ask the name of villages through which we passed or which we saw on the other side of the canal as the fact whether a place-name is of Arabic or non-Arabic origin furnishes a considerable amount of information to the historian of the Delta.

Leaving early in the morning around seven we followed the Rosetta Branch of the Nile from Giza on the west side, crossed on the bridge north of the Barrage to the east bank, took the black-top highway via Shibin el Kom to Tanta, and then, on secondary roads, reached the Damietta Branch south of Busiris, the legendary birthplace of Osiris. There are two villages within sight of each other, Bana Abu Sir and Abu Sir Bana whose names are rather confusing. The northern hamlet, Abu Sir Bana, high on a small kom at a bend of the Nile branch, overlies the ancient town of Busiris, but the only Pharaonic survival is the large doorblock inscribed for Darius, of red granite, which lies in the street in front of the gate to a private dwelling and which was seen many years ago by Naville. Maneuvering the jeeps in the narrow alleys was quite difficult, but the people were friendly and helpful and did not seem to mind the strangers. However, we did not find out in whose house Labib Habachi, formerly Chief Inspector of Lower Egypt, discovered the statue of Sema-tawyt-efnakht which he intends soon to publish.



The cemetery of Busiris lies in the cultivation about three kilometers to the west of the town. It is known locally as Kom el Kebir ('Big Hill') which indicates, since it is only about 4 meters high and 20 meters long, to what extent it has been depleted in modern times. It lies on private property and is not listed as a site of the Antiquities Department. Two large limestone sarcophagi, undecorated, but complete with lids, stand at the end of the path which leads to the kom through the fields, and there are fragments of several others around. There are several courses of limestone masonry in the tall grass at the southeast end of the kom and climbing to the top of the hill we found fragments of red granite and black basalt among the potsherds. Behind the kom, on the north side, are about a dozen red granite fragments of a sarcophagus, at least one of which is inscribed and illustrated with a chapter of the Book of the Dead and names the owner, one Hr-inp, son of Wnn-nfr and of (fem.) Istt-ijty. The date appears to be 4th to 3d cent. B.C.

Following the road along the west bank of the Damietta Branch to the north we came to Samannud. From the main square one turns left, crosses the railroad tracks on the new overpass, and on the other side, before the canal bridge, turns right again for the hospital. This is the site of the temple of the ancient Sebennyptos from which some reliefs have found their way to European and American museums, well discussed by Steindorff in the Journal of the Walters Art Gallery for 1944-45. A small section of the kom, with fragments of pottery and basalt and now surmounted by a house and trees, lies between the hospital and the railroad overpass, whereas the remnants of the temple walls, large blocks of basalt, quartzite, and red granite, are found behind and to the north of the hospital. There are two groups, many pieces barely sticking out of the ground and overgrown with tall reeds and grass, and their inscriptions of the times of Philippus Arrhidaeus and Ptolemy II are well cut. This body of material is of considerable interest, but the site is not guarded and the blocks will probably disappear if further constructions permit the town to grow in this direction.

Following the excellent highway to the north, about halfway between Samannud and El Mansura, we found the side road to the west which leads straight to the village of Behbeit el Higara, the site of the ancient Iseion, known for many centuries as one of the most spectacular temple ruins of Egypt. The high enclosure walls of mud brick on the north and south side, now covered by the Muhammadan cemetery of the village, are well preserved, and from their crest one has a fine view of the chaotic mass of large decorated slabs, piled on top of one another, which form the main body of the collapsed temple extending over an area of about 200 by 600 feet. The material is most colorful, mainly red granite and black basalt, although we also noted grey and black granite slabs and some undecorated pieces of quartzite. This site has furnished a considerable number of fine reliefs of Dynasty XXX and early Ptolemaic date for American museums (see Steindorff's article cited above and BMFA LI, 1953, pp. 1-7); yet no systematic work has ever been undertaken to clear the place, make a plan of the temple, or even attempt a reconstruction. Climbing over the blocks at different levels we found only in one spot what appears to be the floor of the temple. It is hoped that the Department of Antiquities or a learned institution will, in the not too distant future, undertake work at Behbeit el Higara. Little excavating would be involved, and with modern equipment, so successfully employed in the archaeology of other countries, the



layout of the temple, the sequence of the fine wall decorations, and the history of the place could be established which should result in an attractive publication since the Iseion offers much visual material. The place is guarded by a ghafir of the Department of Antiquities, and since we had notified the inspectorates responsible for the sites we intended to visit on this trip, he was most helpful and offered us tea and other refreshments amidst the ruins--a welcome interruption as the day was hot and by now, in the middle of the afternoon, we had become somewhat weary.

Retracing our way to the main road we followed it to El Mansura and spent the night at the excellent Hotel Acropole, overlooking the Damietta Branch of the Nile. The town is quite modernized and is well situated for making a number of excursions in the Central Delta. Early the next morning we drove northeast to Dikirnis and then, with a few inquiries, made our way along country roads and through fields to Kom Etbele, the ancient Ro-nefer (Onnoupis), a sanctuary of Osiris, dear to this writer as the provenance of Louvre no. E 7689, a Late Egyptian headless statue. The kom is about a mile long, extending north-south, and on the whole makes an untouched impression except for the northern end where a sebak hole shows large pieces of pottery and intact mud-brick constructions. No excavation has ever been undertaken at the place in recent decades and hardly anything is known of its history. The surface of the kom, which rises to about 30 feet at the highest point, has been modeled by wind and rain and consists of fine powderized mud, intermingled with carbon and charcoal. It may have been destroyed by a conflagration in ancient times, but a few inches below this top layer there are undisturbed mud bricks in situ everywhere. The place is strewn with pottery fragments, but there are also many pieces of quartzite, black basalt, fine-grained black as well as grey-green granite, and bits of oxydized bronze and pieces of glass. We also found traces of faience and limestone and noted on the west side two groups of large red granite blocks near the cultivation where the kom is leveled off. The northern group consists of about twenty pieces, the southern of twenty-five; both seem to belong to naoi, but there were no inscriptions. The countryside is not densely settled and the place may remain undisturbed for some years to come.

We now turned south and on the El Simbillawein highway approached the most impressive site of our journey, the sanctuary of the ram of Mendes, now known generally as Tell Ruba and Timai el Amdid. Actually there are two places which have to be distinguished, Thmouis and Mendes, and the two koms are separated by several hundred yards of cultivation. The north kom is very extensive and rather high, with parts of the enclosure wall fairly well preserved on both the east and west sides. Its main attraction is the gigantic naos, inscribed for Amasis, which rises now to a height of about 35 feet including the foundations which consist of three courses of limestone and one enormous slab of red granite. The naos itself is about 17 feet high and faces north as the temple was laid out in a north-south direction. But of the building itself there is, strangely enough, nothing to be seen except for a few fragments here and there. The naos, on its substructure, stands in a large hole and thus is even more impressive by its height. Though still complete, except for the doors, it nevertheless shows a number of irregular breaks which must have been caused by fire since it is not known to have been destroyed and reconstructed. On the contrary, it was admired by the early travelers who may have been equally impressed by the place as a whole which even today in its ruinous state commands respect by mere size and extent. Yet it has been sadly neglected by scholarship: no good plan exists,



no systematic excavation has ever been undertaken, and since Daressy nobody has studied the topography of the place. The height of the kom alone would protect a digger from striking water for many years of work, and it would be worth while at least to establish the layout of the ancient temple which forms but a small section of the entire north kom. There are blocks of granite inscribed for Ramesses II, many limestone and quartzite fragments, and on the northeast edge of the hole whose center is taken up by the foundations of the naos we noted a large quartzite block with a well cut inscription of Nectanebo I sticking out of the debris. In the axis of what must have been the area of the temple proper are a number of gigantic black granite undecorated sarcophagi, probably for the sacred rams, and at the northern end, near the highway, is the place where Labib Habachi found the fragmentary royal torso, now in the magazine of Kafr Amir Ibn es-Salam. For sheer majesty and size the north kom of Mendes, despite its ruinous appearance, is certainly one of the most imposing sights of Egypt.

The south kom abuts on the southeast corner of the little village of Kafr Amir Ibn es-Salam where we were received with much courtesy by the ghafir of the Antiquities Department. He opened the storeroom for us and let us photograph the fragmentary sculpture and copy the inscriptions which are kept there. Later we explored the south kom which rises gradually and obviously was the site of the ancient town down to early Christian times. The place has been much despoiled by the sebakheen but amidst the shambles and mountains of potsherds rise a number of late houses of mud brick. The various stories as well as streets, alleys, and squares are clearly visible, and the way in which later generations have built their dwellings on earlier structures offers a perfect picture of stratigraphy. In the center of the kom are red granite column bases and at least one fluted column drum of the same material, and at the southeastern end of the site, where it levels off to the cultivation, large red granite blocks and column shafts are lying about. We also noticed many fragments of white limestone and of quartzite, but there were no inscriptions on the south kom.

We left Kafr Amir Ibn es-Salam in the middle of the afternoon and headed for Zagazig via El Simbillawein, taking to country roads near Diyarb Nigm in the direction of Kafr el Muqdam. The Baedeker of 1928-29 calls this region one of the most beautiful parts of the Delta, and the countryside with its winding tree-shaded roads and numerous villages appeared indeed very attractive in the setting sun. There are weeping willows along the drains and canals, many trees dot the fields, and one has the impression that this is old country, intensively cultivated since ancient times--quite different from the district of El Etbele. We entered Kafr el Muqdam on a narrow dam, past the community threshing place, and proceeding slowly through narrow streets had just about reached the 'center of town' when one jeep stalled and the other one had to backtrack in order to push it to a start. By now the whole village was aware of our presence, and to clear a level stretch on which to push the stalled vehicle kept two of us more than busy since the crowd increased every minute. Finally one of us had to act as a forerunner and barely missed being run over by the vehicles trying to gather speed when with a mighty shove he forced the hindquarters of a loaded donkey out of the path. Eventually we reached Tell Muqdam, the ancient Leontopolis where Mahes was worshipped, directly north of the village, but of the kom and temple which yielded among other finds the lion statuettes of Dynasty XXVII, now in the Brooklyn Museum, hardly anything is left. Over the last seventy years the sebakheen have gradually carried off



the ancient hill of which only two tower-like structures of imposing height remain, surrounded by stagnant water which indicates to what extent the debris has been dug away. The rest of the kom is very low and overgrown with the typical shrubs which seem to thrive on potsherds, a sign that the place is exhausted as far as fertile seabakh is concerned. There are some red granite fragments of statues of Ramesses II lying near the village; it is much to be regretted that no thorough investigation of the place was made before its final destruction in modern times.

Surrounded by crowds we made our way back to the jeeps and took off shortly before sunset. This is the season of the grain harvest, and during the two-day trip we saw the fields of golden-brown wheat and observed the cutting, bundling, threshing, and winnowing of the grain at every turn of the road and in the villages. At the same time the rice is being planted, on inundated plots surrounded by low walls of mud, and some fields showed already the tender sprouts of the new crop as green luster above the water surface. By nine o'clock we were back in Cairo, tired, dusty, and quite contented.

\* \* \*

#### THE BENACHI COLLECTION IN ALEXANDRIA

The following item was contributed by Miss  
Louise A. Shier, of the University of Michigan:

"We wish to call to the attention of any member of the American Research Center who may be passing through Alexandria, and especially of those interested in the pottery of Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman Egypt, the collection of Mr. Lucas A. Benachi of 5 rue Rolo, Alexandria; telephone 24536. Mr. Benachi, a member of the Center and a member at large of the Archaeological Institute of America, has collected pottery and small works of art in bone and terracotta, once belonging to the inhabitants of Alexandria and its vicinity. He has both local products and those imported to Egypt in ancient times, mainly from the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.

In his collection the greatest in number by far are the 30,000 and more stamped amphora handles from all over the Northern and Eastern Mediterranean, but mainly from Rhodes. They are, perhaps, unspectacular, but form the material from which history is reconstructed. During the past winter Virginia Grace and her assistants studied this group of Cnidian, Coan, and Cean handles for her forthcoming publications.

Next in number are the terracotta lamps whose decorations yield a wealth of information. Many rare and important pieces illustrating the ingenuity of the ancient lampmakers can be found in the Benachi Collection together with the main types and their variations. Kenneth Rowe included a large number of them in the catalogue of lamps from Egypt which he has prepared. It is now waiting its turn at the publishers and will be the most important work in this field since Petrie published his corpus in Roman Ehnasya.



Of great artistic interest are the 300 and more pieces of carved bone; these small works of art alone are worth a visit to the collection. Many are plaques in high relief made as inlays for boxes, chests, and other house furnishings of Roman and early Coptic homes.

Specialists in pottery will be interested in large groups of sherds covering, to a certain extent, the varied pottery from Alexandria in Greek, Roman, and Christian times. There is also a fine group of Hadra hydriae made in Egypt by Greek craftsmen, a collection of brazier handles with the characteristic bearded heads, and a large selection of fragmentary late 'A' ware platters with figures in low relief. Mrs. Lily B. Ghali, of the French School of Athens, is publishing the Greek vases and classical sherds.

Small pieces of sculpture and many terracotta heads and figures, both Egyptian and Greek in inspiration, and some fine examples of Hellenistic faience ware round out the collection. A small blue-green faience figure of Harpocrates is a rare and lovely object worthy of special mention.

No one working in the Graeco-Roman or early Christian fields should overlook this collection which has proved its usefulness to many scholars in the importance of its contents and the helpful collaboration of Mr. Benachi. But regardless of the period of interest, a visit will be profitable to any member. Not least in importance are the numerous illustrations of the use by craftsmen working in different fields of similar decorative patterns and subjects, many related to the various cults of Alexandria."

\* \* \*

#### CAIRO MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

During the spring, excursions for the Cairo Members of the Center were continued with a trip to the Pyramid of Meidum on March 27. It had been announced in the Embassy's News Digest with an invitation to non-members, and an impressive convoy of 20 cars, with 92 people, assembled on that morning at the beginning of the Darb Girza, 46 miles south of Cairo, for the last 20-minute drive across the desert to the pyramid. The weather was very favorable, not too hot and not too windy, and just before reaching the site a mirage to the west of the track produced the fine image of a lake.

For April 10 a visit to the Serapeum and the Mastaba of Mereruka at Saqqara had been arranged. Forty-three participants came in 11 cars, but it was rather warm that day. It was even warmer on April 17 when the group went to Zawiet el Aryan to see the vast excavation of the unfinished pyramid of Dynasty III. On April 24, Dr. William K. Simpson, Research Associate of the Center in Cairo, took the members to Saqqara for a tour of the Step Pyramid Precinct of King Zoser of Dynasty III, and on May 8 Mr. Bothmer showed a few masterpieces of Egyptian art in the Cairo Museum to a small group of Members. On May 16 the staff gave a tea for the Cairo Members which was well attended and with which the season officially closed. Mr. Simpson left for New York the next day, while Mr. and Mrs. Dimick had already departed on April 22, after the termination of the excavations of the University of Pennsylvania at Mitrahine.

Just before this Newsletter went to press another resident American has joined the Center, thus bringing to twenty-one the number of local Members.

\* \* \*



## VISITORS - ARRIVING AND DEPARTING

There were less tourist visitors in the past two months than during any other part of the season, but the office had several callers and, in some instances, we were able to provide help and give advice. Mr. Lee M. Talbot, staff ecologist of the International Union for the Protection of Nature in Brussels, Belgium, passed through Cairo twice on his way to and from the Sudan. His trip is being sponsored by UNESCO. Mr. Karl Kup, of the New York Public Library, a Member of the Center, left on April 30. He and Mr. Bothmer called on Professor Creswell to discuss details of the microfilming of the latter's famous bibliography on Islamic architecture and art. During the week of April 16-23, Dr. George R. Hughes and Dr. Charles F. Nims, both Members of the Center, stopped in Cairo for a few days after having closed their headquarters at Luxor, Chicago House, for the season. At about the same time, Dr. Ricardo Caminos, of Brown University, Providence, R.I., and Mr. Harry James, of the British Museum, returned from their epigraphic assignment at Gebel Silsileh in Upper Egypt, and the Center gave a reception for them on April 19 which was attended by 24 friends and colleagues. Dr. Rudolf Anthes and Dr. Henry Fischer, of the University of Pennsylvania, closed the expedition house at Mitrahine at the end of April, and early in May left for Philadelphia.

Dr. Louise A. Shier, Curator at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology of the University Museum, Ann Arbor, Michigan, left Egypt at the middle of May. She divided her last month in Alexandria between the Benachi Collection and the Graeco-Roman Museum where she was allowed to sort the lamps collected from Alexandria and the vicinity, numbering in the hundreds, in the Museum storeroom. The guard who was assigned to her took an interest in the sorting and proved a great help. The experience of handling so many Delta lamps was invaluable, and there was much material for comparison with the lamps from the Fayoum and from Upper Egypt which she had been studying in the Coptic and Egyptian Museums in Cairo. She would like to add that the directors and staff of all three museums gave her every assistance in making their collections available and furnishing convenient working quarters.

The lamps which have been her special study came from the University of Michigan excavations at Karanis in the Fayoum, and she made several trips to the site. She was also among the many guests at Chicago House in Luxor this year and spent two days at Assuan. Miss Shier was included in a group which Dr. Zaki Aly took to Touna el Gebel where he directs the excavations for Cairo University. The party took the train for Mellawi where a car met them for the two-hour ride through fields of sugar cane and past small villages of mudbrick houses. The never-ending procession of country life was passing up and down the roads built on the banks of the canals. There was a short stop at Hermopolis where ancient ruins and modern houses intermingle.

Dr. Zaki Aly spared no trouble to make his guests welcome and took them on extensive tours of the site, beginning of course with the chapel of Petosiris. The small tombs were also a fascinating mixture of Egypt and Greece. Frescoes from one of them can be seen in the Graeco-Roman gallery of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The group also went through the extensive underground corridors where mummies of the sacred ibis were buried. There were decorated chapels at intervals and small shrines, or simple jar burials, along the corridors.



After the tours, tea and the quiet of the desert were enjoyed in the walled garden of the resthouse. On the return trip to Mellawi a final stop was made at one of the inscribed boundary stelae of Akhenaten, carved in a cliff of the western desert.

\* \* \*

#### EGYPT SIGNS UNESCO AGREEMENT

On May 7, 1955, the Egyptian Government signed an agreement with a representative of UNESCO headquarters in Paris whereby a 'Center of Documentation' would be established in Cairo under UNESCO auspices, to be subsidized mainly by the Egyptian Government. At the time of this writing the official text of the agreement has not yet been made available and the reports published in the press are not very definite on the major points. It appears that, with UNESCO advice and technical assistance, an institute is to be founded the main task of which will be to serve as a center for all records pertaining to ancient Egyptian monuments, to maintain easily accessible files of photographs of all monuments, and to collect data, drawings, maps, and inscriptions at a centrally located office so that the press and scholars as well as the interested public may obtain all necessary information from a single source. The Documentation Center would be provided with modern office and laboratory equipment and include a staff of epigraphers, draftsmen, architects, and photographers in Cairo as well as in the field in order to collect the material.

According to press reports, Professor Mustafa Amer, Director General of the Department of Antiquities, has been appointed Administrative Executive of the new Center of Documentation, but no official communique has been issued thus far from which more details of the setup can be learned.

\* \* \*

#### THE ANTIQUITIES LAW OF EGYPT

Foreign excavations and the export of antiquities are regulated by the Egyptian Government through the following instruments:

- (1) The so-called Antiquities Law, no. 215/1951, which was passed on October 31, 1951, and published in the official government bulletin shortly thereafter. Certain provisions of this law were implemented by the Ministry of Education in a number of decrees of which the four cited below are of importance to foreign institutions and individuals:
- (2) Ministry of Education Decree no. 10613, dated March 6, 1952, deals with the sale and purchase of ancient Egyptian objects and with the antiquities market.
- (3) Ministry of Education Decree no. 10614, dated March 6, 1952, governs the export of antiquities.
- (4) Ministry of Education Decree no. 10615, dated March 6, 1952, concerns itself with seabakh, radim, and problems of topsoil covering antiquities.



- (5) Ministry of Education Decree no. 10827, dated August 17, 1952, regulates excavations by foreign expeditions.

Copies of item (1) can be obtained from the Ministry of Finance, Midan Lazoghli, whereas copies of items (2)-(5) are available at the Department of Antiquities, Midan el Tahrir.

\* \* \*

#### CORRECTION

In Newsletter XVII, page 11, line 7, the last name of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Field was left out inadvertently.

\* \* \*

#### SUMMER ADDRESS OF THE CENTER

Until September all mail addressed to the Center's Cairo office should be sent c/o USEF/E, Tagher Building, sharia el Shams, Garden City, Cairo, Egypt.

\* \* \*

Ashton Sanborn  
Acting Executive Secretary  
147 Brattle Street  
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts